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ABSTRACT

A survey of 171 governing board members of black public colleges and universities in the southern states considered these variables: sex, race, age, years of service on the board, religious affiliation, method of appointment to the board, educational background, income, undergraduate major, preferred professional reading, professional development, and professional issues of interest. Board members were also surveyed for their perceptions on these issues: areas of special concern in their own institutions; access to higher education on the basis of ability; special funding for black colleges; progress in racial desegregation on campus; faculty, student, and alumni representation on boards; and search for and selection of a college president. (MSE)

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THE MEMBERS OF GOVERNING BOARDS OF HISTORICALLY BLACK PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN PROFILE

July 30, 1977

A STUDY OF GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS OF HISTORICALLY BLACK PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Within the past decade, educators, researchers and social policy specialists have been actively involved in studying, analyzing and synthesizing certain data and emerging trends as they pertain to historically public black colleges and universities. All too often misinterpretation of such data and emerging trends has resulted in a somewhat distorted view of those institutions.

Although there has been extensive study of traditionally black colleges and universities in America, little contemporary information on the governing board members is available. This report aims to increase the specificity of data regarding the composite profile of governing board members of historically public black colleges and perceptions of critical issues as viewed by the chairpersons of the respective governing board members. The population group included in this study represents individuals who play action roles in the process of making policies and recommending policies for the participating institutions. Although all participants are involved in the governance process uniformity in nomenclature is missing as the various respondents returned their questionnaires. The following titles are associated with the various respondents who are serving as governing board members: curators, regents, trustees, and supervisors.

Many of the governing board members who participated in this study represent institutions that have become constituent parts of centralized or university systems of higher education which adds to the advisory role of recommending function of the respective governing board members.

Although nine of the thirty-four institutions featured in this study are part of centralized or university systems, the role of governing board members is important and crucial to the future development of historically black public colleges.

The role of governing board members of historically black public colleges will take on added significance and importance as those institutions continue to chart their courses toward becoming mainstream oriented institutions of higher education. This statement becomes increasingly true as one reviews certain projections and predictions that have been made for thirteen of the nineteen states where historically black public colleges are located. Those thirteen states include:

1. Alabama
2. Arkansas
3. Florida

4. Georgia
5. Louisiana
6. Maryland
7. Mississippi
8. North Carolina
9. South Carolina
10. Tennessee
11. Texas
12. Virginia
13. West Virginia

Among predictions that may generate increased problems for historically black public colleges are the following:

1. The south's two year colleges will become increasingly popular with blacks, women and older students.

2. The number of 18-24 year old students will be decreasing.

3. Traditionally aged college students in many cases will not invest in a college education due to the supply of college graduates is greater than the supply of jobs available.

4. The management of higher education will become more centralized within the next decade and institutions of higher education will become increasingly more accountable to state legislatures and educational planners.

With such predictions being made for the next decade for institutions in the southern region of the United States, the roles, duties and responsibilities of trustees will take on added significance. The ability of governing board members to engage in the promotion and development of enlightened policymaking for their respective institutions becomes crucial.

Although certain dim predictions have been made for higher education in general, predictions and projections do not necessarily have to become realities. Trustees of historically black public colleges should be aware of such projections and begin to develop alternatives, courses of action and futuristic strategies that will eliminate or minimize any adverse impact of aforementioned predictions generally made for higher education in the southern region of the United States. Governing board members of historically black public colleges should remain constantly aware of the contributions made and the critical role that historically black public colleges play in making the American society a better society in which to live. The challenges facing governing board members of traditionally black public colleges are intense and profound, for committee governing board members must do more than make policies for an institution of higher education, they often become the first line of defense for protection of the integrity value and continued survival of a given institution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Data for this study could not have been obtained without the assistance and cooperation of the chief executives and board members of the participating questions.

Acknowledged with thanks for special advice and assistance are Drs. Bill Feltner, Associate Professor of Higher Education at the University of Georgia; Carl M. Hill, President, Hampton Institute; J. B. Jones, Dean of School of Education, Texas Southern University; Howard Jordan, Vice Chancellor for Services, the University of Georgia System; Earl McGrath, Director of Programs in Liberal Studies, the University of Arizona; Paul Mohr, Dean of the School of Education, Florida A&M University; Gloria Scott, Consultant in Higher Education, Texas Southern University; and Leonard Slade, Chairman of the English Department, Kentucky State University.

Special appreciation is extended to governing board members for their cooperation and assistance in helping to produce this report.

A COMPOSITE PROFILE: CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDING GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

I. PERSONAL PROFILE:

This dimension of the study represents an effort to present a personal profile of individuals serving on the governing boards of historically public black colleges and universities.

The present profile is based upon information from two major sources: (1) a questionnaire which was mailed to 268 governing board members, and (2) personal interviews with selected governing board members. One hundred and seventy-one (171) questionnaires were returned representing nearly sixty-four (64) percent of the total population.

A. SEX:

Of the 171 governing board members returning questionnaires, 15 respondents were serving as chairpersons of their respective boards. 150 or 88% of the responding trustees are males, with the remaining 21 members being classified as females.

B. ETHNIC FACTOR:

An analysis of the ethnic factor revealed that 107 governing board members were classified as being Caucasians and the remaining 64 classified themselves as being black Americans.

C. AGE RANGES:

Respondents in this study range in age from 18 to 66 years of age.

Of the 171 participants included in this study, the following age categories represent the age range of participants:

1. Four board members were found to be in the 18 to 25 years old age category.

2. Eight respondents were found to be in the 26 to 33 age range.

3. Fourteen participants were found to be in the 34 to 41 age range.

4. Thirty-eight respondents were found to be in the 42 to 49 age range.

5. Forty-three board members were in the 50 to 57 age range.

6. Thirty-four participants were in the 58 to 65 age range.

7. Thirty participants were found to be 66 years of age and older.

7. Thirty participants were found to be 66 years of age and older.

D. YEARS OF SERVICE:

In analyzing the years of service that participating governing board members had served on their boards, the following patterns emerged:

1. 117 respondents selected the 1 through 5 years range as the number of years they had served as members.

2. 33 respondents selected the 6 through 10 years range as the number of years they had served.

3. 12 participants selected the 11 through 15 years range.

4. 6 participants selected the 16 through 20 years range.

5. 3 respondents selected the 20 or more years range.

Of the 171 respondents participating in this study only thirty-one had previously served as governing board members of private and church related institutions of higher education.

C. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

The preponderance of the respondents were quite unabashed at naming the religious denomination in which they held membership. The one hundred sixty-two responses to the question focusing on religious affiliation revealed the following affiliations:

1. 45 respondents identified themselves as holding membership in the Baptist church.

2. 42 participants identified themselves as holding membership in the Methodist church.

3. 29 respondents selected the Episcopal church as the church in which they hold membership.

4. 21 respondents identified themselves as holding membership in the Presbyterian church.

5. 25 other respondents selected various other churches as the church in which they hold membership.

6. 9 respondents did not respond to the question regarding religious affiliation.

II. Of the 171 responses included in this study, the following represent the methods of their selection:

1. 127 respondents suggested that they were appointed by the Governors of their respective states.

2. 10 respondents stated that they were selected by other board members.

3. 9 participants indicated that they were selected due to recommendations made by state legislators.

4. 4 participants were selected by popular vote.

5. 8 respondents were selected due to recommendations by influential private citizens.

6. 13 respondents were selected due mainly to other processes. Those "other processes" included recommendations by alumni members, other groups and the retention of board members who were serving on a board for an independent institution that became state related.

Although 127 respondents suggested that they were appointed by their respective governors, only seventy (70) stated that they were confirmed by their respective state senates.

III. THE PROFESSIONAL PROFILE:

The professional dimension of the governing board members focuses on issues such as educational backgrounds, income levels, major areas of undergraduate study, professional periodicals read and governing board related growth and development activities.

A. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

An analysis of educational backgrounds and attainments of governing board members of historically black public colleges and universities revealed that all trustees were high school graduates. High school graduation served as the highest level of educational attainment for five respondents. The attainment of the Associate of Arts degree served as the highest level of educational achievement for five respondents.

Fifty-seven of the one hundred seventy-one respondents selected the baccalaureate degree as their highest level of educational attainment.

One hundred and three (103) participants stated that the graduate, professional and terminal degrees constituted their highest level of educational attainment. Those persons holding earned graduate, professional and terminal degrees included a variety of professional and specialized careers. Included among this group are attorneys, bankers, business and corporate executives, agri-business executives, dentists, physicians, podiatrists and professors.

B. INCOME:

Due to the sensitivity often associated with the issue of income, precise fugures were not requested. However, respondents were

requested to select the income range that most appropriately coincided with their real income. The results of data ascertained revealed the following income patterns:

1. 60 respondents has incomes $45,000 and above.

2. 19 participants had annual incomes ranging from $35,999 to $45,000.

3. 26 respondents earned annual incomes that ranged from $25,999 to $35,000.

4. 16 participants earned incomes that ranged from $20,999 to $25,000.

5. 11 respondents reported having annual incomes that ranged from $15,999 to $20,000.

6. 16 respondents reported that they earned annual incomes that ranged from $10,000 to $15,000.

7. 2 respondents reported no income due to the fact they were unemployed housewives.

8. 21 participants did not respond to the income related question.

C. UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR AREAS OF STUDY:

An analysis of the 161 responses provided by participants in this study revealed that the undergraduate majors of participants centered essentially around five distinct units of study. Those five academic areas are the humanities and arts, natural sciences, social sciences, education and business administration.

1. 21 participants had undergraduate majors in the humanities and arts.

2. 45 participants earned undergraduate degrees with majors in the natural sciences.

3. 43 participants earned undergraduate degrees with majors in the social sciences.

4. 36 respondents earned undergraduate degrees with majors in the areas of business administration and commerce.

5. 16 respondents earned undergraduate degrees with majors in education.

Baccalaureate degrees held by governing board members were earned at a variety of institutions of higher education located primarily in the southern and eastern regions of the nation.

IV PROFESSIONAL PERIODICALS:

The vast majority of the governing board members participating in this study are reading a multiplicity of varied publications, periodcals and newsletters germane to higher education and governance. Thirty three percent (57) of the 171 study participants listed the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges publications and newsletters as the most frequently read higher education publication. The Chronicle of Higher Education was selected as the second most frequently read higher education periodical by forty-four respondents. The New York Times newspaper ranks as the third most frequently read periodical among respondents. The fourth and fifth most frequently selected periodical read by the participating board members were the American Association of University Professors Bulletin and the National Education Association periodical. Although a multitude of other periodicals were read by various participants. Such periodicals received were selected by fewer than nine respondents.

Some respondents did not respond to the question regarding professional periodicals, and others suggested that they did not have sufficient time to do such reading.

V. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:

In order to identify the types of professional development activities that governing board members were engaging in, the following question was asked. Have you participated in any structured programs, seminars or institutes within the last three years whose primary objectives were to help increase the understanding of your role as a governing board member? Eighty-four of the one hundred seventy-one participants responded affirmatively to the question regarding seminars, institutes and structured programs. The remaining 87 participants indicated that they had not attended such programs.

It is significant to note that fifty-six of the eighty-seven individuals who suggested that they had not attended such seminars, institutes or other structured programs were willing to participate in such programs.

Governing board members were asked to list seminar topics or subjects that would be of interest to them. The most frequently listed topics cited by participants in this study were

1. 38 participants selected the financing of public higher education as a topic that should be discussed.

2. 26 respondents selected the issue of developing a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of governing board members as the second most frequently cited topic that should

be included as part of the agenda of future seminars and institutes focusing on governance.

3. 8 participants listed understanding the legal aspects of trusteeship and institutional long range planning as the third most frequently cited topic that they would like to have discussed in seminars or institutes for governing board members.

4. 6 respondents selected the development of effective and clearly defined personnel policies, improving legislative relations, university-community relations, improving curriculum planning and management systems as the fourth most frequently listed topics that should be discussed in future governance institutes and seminars.

Additional topics were listed by various governing board members; however, topics receiving fewer than six responses were not listed.

PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNING BOARD CHAIRPERSONS

The second dimension of this study centers around the eliciting of perceptions and opinions of fifteen governing board chairpersons regarding certain public policy issues and other issues categorized as critical issues in higher education.

Participating chairpersons in this study were asked to list their four greatest concerns regarding the institutions they serve as trustees. An analysis of responses revealed the following information:

1. 15 chairpersons identified the securing of finances from the state as a principal concern.

2. 10 chairpersons selected faculty productivity as a major area of concern.

3. 8 of the 15 chairpersons selected administrative leadership and the public image of their institutions as an area of primary concern.

4. 6 chairpersons cited potential enrollment problems as one of their primary concerns.

5. 4 chairpersons cited curricula revision and the improvement of physical facilities also as principal areas of concern.

Due to the increased competition for students by all institutions of post-secondary education, chairpersons participating in this study were asked if community college systems pose a threat to the future success of historically black public colleges. Five of the fifteen respondents stated that such institutions did pose a threat to the future success of historically black public colleges.

The question regarding who should go to college was responded to by the fifteen chairpersons in the following manner:

1. 13 respondents agreed that college should be available for all.

2. 1 chairperson suggested that only the upper third of high school graduates should attend college.

3. 1 chairperson did not respond to the question regarding who should attend college.

Past practices of systematic discrimination in the funding of historically black public colleges by their respective state legislatures have had an adverse impact on the growth and development of such institutions. Due to inequity in past funding practices, chairpersons were asked if their state legislatures had approved and funded any special program of support that would provide "catch up funds" for their institutions within the last five years.

1. 7 chairpersons responded that their state legislatures had provided catch up funds for particular areas.

2. 7 chairpersons stated that their state legislatures had not provided such funds.

3. 1 chairperson did not respond to the question regarding catch up funds.

Six of the seven governing board chairpersons who reported that their state legislatures had not appropriated catch up funds stated that they were prepared and willing to promote such an effort.

A critical problem facing mary statewide networks of higher education is the issue of systemwide desegregation. Historically black public colleges are often brought into the focal point of controversy regarding this issue, despite the fact that they have never denied admission to any student on the basis of race, sex or national origin. Chairpersons were asked if meaningful progress in the area of racial desegregation was being made by the institutions they represented. The following responses were provided:

1. 11 chairpersons stated that meaningful progress was being made in the area of racial desegregation by the institutions they represented.

2. 4 chairpersons stated that meaningful progress was not being made in the area of racial desegregation.

Comments made by the four dissenting chairpersons were coupled with statements that implied that the lack of progress in the area was due to inadequate financial resources and other external factors.

Participating chairpersons were asked to share their opinions regarding participation by students, faculty and alumni members in the governance process. Opinions varied among the fifteen chairpersons. The following responses were given;

1. 4 chairpersons favored the concept of having faculty, student and alumni representation with voting rights serving as board members.

2. 8 chairpersons did not favor the idea of having faculty and student alumni representation with voting rights serving as board members.

3. 3 chairpersons failed to respond to the question regarding faculty, student and alumni participation in the governance process.

Participating chairpersons were requested to list the five most important qualities they look for when conducting a search for the presidency or chancellorship of an institution of higher education. The five most frequently listed qualities are

1. 9 chairpersons listed administrative experiences as one of five important qualities they look for when conducting a search for the presidency or the chancellorship.

2. 7 respondents cited high educational attainment as one of five important qualities sought when conducting a search for institutional executive leadership.

3. 5 participants cited the ability to delegate responsibility, leadership qualities, and understanding of effective public relations as important qualities sought when conducting a search to fill the presidency or chancellorship.

4. 4 chairpersons cited the ability to relate and work with people as a characteristic they look for when conducting a search to fill the presidency or chancellorship.

5. 4 chairpersons cited integrity and character as characteristics they look for when conducting a search for filling the presidency or chancellorship.

Additional characteristics and qualities were listed by various chairpersons. Characteristics and qualities receiving fewer than four selections were not listed in this report.

FUTURE OF PUBLIC BLACK COLLEGES:

Based on the information provided by ten of the fifteen participating chairpersons, historically black public colleges do have a future role to play in American higher education. Comments provided by the ten chairpersons regarding the future role of historically black public colleges range from that of becoming more competitive and expansion of role and scope to that of localizing the recruitment base of the institutions. Although the expressed comments were positive in nature, one has to question any courses of action that would impose a limitation on the radius of recruitment for prospective students.

One significant development is the fact that several chairpersons stated that new non-traditional programs will be offered and that an effort will be made to attract more non-traditionally college-aged students.

FUNCTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

Chairpersons participating in this study were asked to share their opinions regarding emphasis that should be given to traditional universities' functions. Analysis of chairpersons' responses reflected the following opinions toward research, teaching and public service.

1. 9 chairpersons suggested that research and training in practical subjects which would help business, government and industry in their respective states should receive great emphasis. An additional 4 chairpersons felt that such functions should receive some emphasis but not great emphasis.

2. 13 chairpersons suggested that teaching which will help undergraduate students prepare for particular jobs and professions. An additional chairperson ranked this function as one that should receive some emphasis but not great emphasis.

3. 10 chairpersons ranked the teaching of undergraduate students as a function that should receive great emphasis. An additional four chairpersons ranked that function as one that should receive some emphasis but less than great emphasis.

4. 5 chairpersons ranked research and training in subjects which could help in solving problems such as poverty, injustice, and other social ills. 6 chairpersons ranked this function as one that deserves some emphasis while 1 chairperson felt such functions deserved no emphasis.

5. 5 chairpersons ranked basic scientific research as a function that should receive great emphasis. 8 participants ranked basic scientific research as a function that should receive some emphasis. 1 chairperson suggested that basic scientific research as a function should not receive any emphasis.

6. 5 chairpersons ranked teaching and providing conferences and workshops for adults throughout the state who are not regular students as a function that should receive great emphasis. Eight respondents ranked that function as one that should receive some emphasis. 1 respondent suggested that this function should not receive any emphasis.

7. 6 chairpersons ranked the teaching of subjects such as literature and philosophy that are valuable in many respects but do not help undergraduate students prepare for particular jobs as a function that should receive great emphasis. 7 chairpersons ranked that function as one that served some emphasis. 2 respondents implied that they did not know how much emphasis should be associated with that function.

THE ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE IN EXTERNAL FUNDING:

The critical need for external dollars has manifested itself on an increasing basis. The need for external dollars is a critical issue for the nation's historically black public colleges and universities. Because of the critical need for such external financial assistance it was concluded that an assessment of the attitudes of governing board chairpersons would be helpful. The following question was posed to chairpersons participating in this study, do you think that it is the

responsibility of the governing board members to assist in the identification and securing of external funds to assist in the development of historically black public colleges? The responses to that question are:

1. 12 chairpersons responded in the affirmative and stated that they perceived such a function to be part of their responsibilities as governing board members.

2. 2 chairpersons responded that they did not perceive the identification and securing of external funds as part of their responsibilities.

3. 1 participant did not respond to the question regarding external funding.

SUMMARY:

An analysis of the data submitted by the participants in this study enables this writer to arrive at certain general and descriptive conclusions regarding the participants in this study. The "typical" board member serving on the governing boards of historically black public colleges may best be described in the following manner.

The "typical" governing board member is a Caucasian male who is approximately fifty three (53) years of age. He holds membership in a Protestant church and earns an annual income of approximately forty thousand dollars ($40,000.00).

Further descriptive data revealed that the "typical" board member holds an earned baccalaureate degree with an undergraduate major in either the social sciences or the natural sciences. Although the preponderance of governing board members hold earned baccalaureate degrees, a significant number of the participants also hold professional and graduate degrees. The vast majority of baccalaureate, graduate and professional degrees earned by most of the participants were conferred by a variety of institutions of higher education geographically located in the southern and eastern regions of the United States.

The three most popularly selected publications read by participants in this study were the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges publications, the Chronicle of Higher Education and the New York Times.

Participating board members indicated that the two higher education issues generating the greatest degree of concern among them were the financing of public higher education and the securing of a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities as governing board members.

Additional data and narrative comments provided by respondents sug-

gest that the governing boards of the various institutions have more diverse ethnic representation than ever before. The involvement and participation of black Americans on the governing boards represents increased representation by blacks. Such developments obviously resulted from a multitude of different social, economic and political reasons. Equally important is the fact that female representation on the governing board appears to be increasing.

Within the last two years Alabama A&M University and Alabama State University have for the first time in their histories their own governing boards. Previously those two institutions had been under the control of the State Board of Education. Such changes should prove to be beneficial to the two institutions as they continue to chart their courses toward becoming mainstream institutions of higher education.

The largest system of traditionally black higher education in this nation has a relatively new governing board which is officially known as a board of supervisors. The Southern University System (Louisiana) has two four year campuses and a two year community college. Those campuses are located in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Shreveport, Louisiana respectively. The Board of Supervisors is a majority-black governing board that has the authority to recommend and make policies for the Southern University System as well as the latitude to consult with certain legislative bodies. This board is relatively new and obviously has increased complex problems to deal with due to the fact that it has three distinct campuses to govern.

As one views the problems of American higher education, the recent creation of this board and the fact that the Southern System constitutes the largest unit of traditionally black higher education in this nation, the challenges facing this board are enormous and critical.

It is safe to conclude that trustees, curators, supervisors and governing board members of any other names serving on the governing boards of historically public black colleges should purposely strive to become more aware of their roles, responsibilities and duties.

Narrative comments, data ascertained through questionnaires and interviews of various governing board chairpersons suggest that governing board members who participated in this study are committed to their respective institutions. Secondly, most of them also recognize the need for technical assistance from competent based organizations if they are to be effective governing board members, and if the respective institutions are to continue fulfilling the historical and new missions assigned them.